

(7)

A LETTER

FROM

EDMUND ELLIS

A MINISTER of the
Church of England

TO

JOHN NORRIS

Another Minister of the same Church

In Vindication of the QUAKERS from the Charge
of being

SOCINIANS.

SIR,

HAVING been lately informed, that a French Minister now in London, being found Guilty of Spreading the Doctrine of the SOCINIANS, is said to pretend to be a Quaker; and having a long time thought it my Duty to do what in me Lies, to take off that harmless sort of Men, that are call'd Quakers from that Popular Odium, which by some Persons they have been most Unjustly exposed unto, I make this Address to you, being known to have Writ against them, but a

A

Person



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Person of more Learning and Candor than any other that I have yet known to have Written against them; most earnestly Entreating you by the Love we owe to *all Mankind*, that you would be pleased to concur with me in my present Endeavours to vindicate these Men, from that unjust Imputation, *viz.* That they are *SOCINIANS*. You know *R. Barkley*, in his *Apology*, P. 84. says expressly " If (the Doctrine Concerning the "*Light within*) contradicts, overturns, and enervates " the false Doctrine of the *Pelagians*, *Semi-pelagians*, *SOCINIANS* and others, who exalt the Light of " Nature, [and] the Liberty of Mans Will, in that it " wholly excludes the Natural man from having any " place, or portion in his own Salvation, by any Acting, " Working, or moving of his own, untill he be first " quickned, raised up, and acted by Gods Spirit.

Clement Lake (one of those they call *Quakers*) in one of his Letters (lately Publisht) to *John Flavel* an *Independent Preacher* has these Words, in Answer to *Flavels* Charge, That the *Quakers* lead men to Obedience to the *Light within for Salvation*: " We press Obedience to " the *Light within*, we own who is *Jesus Christ the Light*, " of *Israel* the *Light of the World*, who is given to be a " Covenant to the People, and a *Light to the Gentiles*, " to open the blind eyes *Esa* 42. 6, 7. This was *David's* " Light to his Feet, and *Lanthorn* to his Paths, *Pf.* 119. " 115. And this Word, or Light, or *Jesus* was in the beginning, and in him was life, and the life was the *Light* " of men, *John* 1. 8. Can those Men be *SOCINIANS*, who acknowledge that *Jesus Christ* is the *True Light* In every Man, which he could not be, if he were not *Infinite*? I must bear my Testimony to this *Crooked and Perverse Generation*, That *Jesus Christ* being the *True*,
and

and Eternal GOD is IN every Man, *Converting* or *Convincing* him in order to his *Conversion*, or (in proportion to the *Repugnancy* he makes against the *Divine Illumination*) *Tormenting* him: I say *Tormenting* him, not *Directly* but *Consequentially*, as the *Torment* or *Vexation* of a *Spirit*, or *Rational Soul*, is the *Natural Result* of all *Repugnancy* to THE TRUE LIGHT, which is the INFINITY of *Goodness*. I further Testify, and shall be ever ready, by the Grace of God to maintain the Assertion (which I hope by you will not be denied) that 'tis possible for any man (that has not made up the full Measure of Iniquity) at all times, and in all places, by a Sincere Dependance upon the Power and Virtue of the LIGHT WITHIN, MANIFESTING any Action to be *Sinful*, to conceive an *Aversion* to it. I desire your Candid Reflections on the Answer I shall here give to one Passage in your First Treatise Concerning the *Divine Light*, p. 65. "I had no Reason to confine it (as the *Quakers* do) "to *Divine* and *Spiritual Truths*, but to extend it to all "Truth without Exception, which I suppose to be equally perceivable in this *Divine Light*, which as being the "very *Essence* of God, must be equally exhibitiv of all. To this I answer, First that the *Quakers* speaks of the LIGHT with reference to his being INCARNATE, And so 'tis manifest, whatsoever Influence he has upon the Souls of Men, it is in Order to their *Sanctification*, it shews nothing else but *Sanctifying Truth*. Secondly, I assert, that all Truth is *Divine, Sanctifying Truth*, which being *Rightly apprehended*, will most certainly carry the Soul to GOD, the PRIME VERITY, the *Fountain of all Being*. You say, you suppose all Truth to be equally Perceivable in this *Divine Light*. We grant that all such Truth, the *Consideration* whereof is for the Present Neces-

sancto our *Sanctification*, is Perceivable in this *Divine Light*.
 There are many things in your Publisht Writings that
 deserve the thanks of all Men, particularly your Confu-
 tation of Mr. *Locks* Conceit that we have no *Innate Ideas*
of God ; For whose sake I beseech you to own the *Truth*,
 wheresoever you find it, and I shall ever remain

Your Faithful Servant in
 the love of all Truth,

Totness in Devon.

August 4. 1693.

EDMUND ELYS